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NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WAR COUNCIL

On November 21, 1917, His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons addressed a letter to the American Hierarchy proposing the formation of a new National Catholic War Council. This letter was the result of an informal conference of the Archbishops and Bishops present at the semi-annual meeting of the Catholic University Trustees. The response of the American Hierarchy was unanimous; and on December 19, 1917, His Eminence addressed a second letter to the Archbishops suggesting the formation of an Administrative Committee for the actual management of the National Catholic War Council. The hearty endorsement of the Archbishops followed, and the following Bishops were named: the Right Rev. P. J. Muldoon, D.D., Bishop of Rockford, *Chairman*; the Right Rev. J. Schrembs, D.D., Bishop of Toledo, the Right Rev. P. J. Hayes, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of New York, and the Right Rev. William T. Russell, D.D., Bishop of Charleston, S. C. The first meeting of this Administrative Committee was held at the Catholic University, on January 16, 1918. In his letter of January 12, 1918, calling the Administrative Committee together, Cardinal Gibbons defined the task ahead of the four Bishops: namely, to direct and control, with the aid of the American Hierarchy, all Catholic activities in the war.

With the Declaration of War against the Central Powers, every part of the organization of the Church immediately became solicitous to do its share in assisting the Government. Activities of all kinds were begun in various parts of the country, and individual as well as corporate cooperation with such movements as the Belgian Relief, the Red Cross, the Liberty Loan, and others, became the watchword. The number of enlisted and drafted men opened the eyes of Catholics throughout the United States to the large quota of their coreligionists in the Army and Navy, and it was felt that every effort should be made for their welfare. Before the first contingent of men in the Service had been completed, it was common talk that the percentage of Catholics in the Service, both at home and overseas, was out of all proportion to the number of Catholics in the country. How to cope with the problem of cooperating with the Government and with private societies for their welfare became the paramount question.

That a National Catholic organization of some sort was necessary soon became apparent, and in August, 1917, a *National Catholic War Council of the United States of America* was created. Its object was as follows: to promote the spiritual and material welfare of the United States troops during the war wherever they may be, at home, or abroad, and to study, coordinate, unify and put in operation all Catholic activities incidental to the war.

This War Council, known now as the *Old Catholic War Council*, consisted of:

1. A *National Council* composed of representatives named by the Archbishops and Bishops of the dioceses of the United States;
2. A *Local Council* consisting of members appointed by the Ordinary of each diocese in such numbers as he should deem proper;

3. An *Executive Committee* consisting of one clerical and one lay member appointed by each Archbishop of the United States from his province; and of members-at-large, not to exceed three in number, appointed by the Executive Committee.

At the first meeting of the Executive Committee at the Catholic University, on August 11-12, 1917, the following resolutions were passed:

Resolved, That it is the unanimous opinion of this Convention that the Catholics of the United States should devote their united energies to promote the spiritual and material welfare of the United States troops during the war, wherever they may be, at home, or abroad, and should create a National Organization to study, coordinate, unify, and put in operation all Catholic activities incidental to the war;

Resolved, That in order to effect this National coordination, a Committee of seven be appointed by the Chairman of this Convention to devise a plan of organizing, throughout the United States, a National body to be called *The National Catholic War Council*. We suggest that this Council be made up of *Local Councils* in each Diocese, to consist of the Ordinary of the Diocese and the two Delegates to this Convention and such others as the Ordinary may designate; a *National Council* composed of members from all the Dioceses in the United States appointed by the Ordinaries; and an *Executive Committee* of one Delegate from each Archdiocese to be appointed by the Archbishop; that this Organization be completed and put in operation without further report to this Convention and that the Executive Committee be authorized to collect such funds as may be necessary for the above-mentioned purposes.

Meanwhile, the Government had asked the Knights of Columbus to cooperate in the work of the moral welfare of the men in service. The following Resolution was therefore passed by this meeting:

Resolved, That this Convention most heartily commends the excellent work which the Knights of Columbus have undertaken in cooperating with the Government of the United States in meeting the moral problems which have arisen and will arise out of the war, and it is the opinion of this Convention that the Knights of Columbus should be recognized as the representative Catholic body for the special work they have undertaken.

This first War Council then pledged itself to give its best efforts in safeguarding the moral and spiritual welfare of our Catholic young men in the Service. Its members held themselves in readiness to cooperate in the work under the spiritual leadership of the Hierarchy. They placed on record their hearty approbation of the admirable regulations made by our War and Navy Department for the safeguarding of our camps, cantonments, naval and military establishments from the moral dangers incident to camp life.

The Committees appointed at that time were:

Committee on Finance.

Committee on Publicity and Information.

Committee on Chaplains.

Committee on Recreation and Recreation Halls.
Committee on Literature and Religious Articles.
Committee on Legislation.
Committee on Historical Records of Catholic War Activities.
Committee on Women's Organizations.

The creation of this first War Council, as we read in its first printed *Handbook*, "was the result of a widespread realization that the transfer of hundreds of thousands of Catholic men from normal to abnormal conditions of living should cause deep solicitude. There is the desire that the Catholic soldier should have ample opportunity for leading a Catholic life, which involves attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments; and there is apprehension concerning the moral and physical welfare of the soldier in the presence of evils which seems to be intensified under the new conditions of living." Among the problems taken up for consideration were: Enlistment Period, Aggregation Camps, Mobilization Camps, Knights of Columbus Halls, Recreation Accessories, Camp Life in France, Families of Soldiers in Service, Training Camp Dangers, a National Catholic Budget for the work, Methods of Forming Diocesan War Councils, etc.

The officers of the old War Council were:

President, Rev. John J. Burke, C. S. P., 120 West 60th St., N. Y.

Secretary, Robert Biggs, Law Building, Baltimore.

Treasurer, John G. Agar, 31 Nassau Street, New York.

The chairmen of the Committees were:

Chaplains, Rt. Rev. Msgr. M. J. Lavelle, New York.

Legislation and By-Laws, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Ed. Kelly, Chicago.

Finance, John G. Agar, New York.

Historical Record of Catholic War Activities, Rt. Rev. Msgr. H. T. Drumgoole, Philadelphia.

Recreation and Rest Halls, Charles I. Denechaud, New Orleans.

Women's Organizations, Rt. Rev. Msgr. M. J. Splaine, Boston.

Executive Secretary, Walter G. Hooke, New York.

Consequently, when the new National Catholic War Council was formed, under the direction of Cardinal Gibbons, the Administrative Committee took advantage of the work done by the Executive Committee of the old War Council and by the Knights of Columbus. The new War Council met for the first time, as proposed, on January 16, 1918, and the projects of the old War Council together with the Knights of Columbus activities were fused into the new organization. The plan of organization adopted was as follows:

I. The National Catholic War Council, composed of the fourteen Archbishops.

II. Administrative Committee, composed of the four Bishops.

I. Committee on Special War Activities.

II. Knights of Columbus Committee on War Activities.

III. Executive Committee, composed of the four Bishops, six members of Knights of Columbus War Council and six members of the old Catholic War Council.

IV. General Committee, composed of two representatives, one clerical and one lay, from each diocese, two representatives from the American Federation of Catholic Societies, two representatives from each National Catholic society, two representatives from the Catholic Press Association, and such other members-at-large as the Committee of Bishops may choose.

The following reorganization of the Committee on Special War Activities was effected:

- I. Committee on Finance.*
- II. Committee on Women's Activities.*
- III. Committee on Men's Activities.*
- IV. Committee on After-War Work.*
- V. Committee on Chaplains.*
- VI. Committee on Publicity.*
- VII. Committee on Historical Records of Catholic War Activities.*

A central Bureau was secured and is now located at 930-932 Fourteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

The *Committee on Historical Records* was placed in charge of the Rt. Rev. H. T. Drumgoole, LL.D., D.D., Rector of St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Pa. Monsignor Drumgoole appointed as his Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Peter Guilday, *associate* professor of American Church History, at the Catholic University. The following letter and *Questionnaire* were sent to all the pastors of churches throughout the United States:

The National Catholic War Council

**Committee on Historical
Records of Catholic War
Activities**

**932 14TH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

CHAIRMAN
RT. REV. MGR. H. T. DRUMGOOLE, D.D., LL.D.
SECRETARY
REV. PETER GUILDAY, PH.D.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WAR RECORDS

The National Catholic War Council was organized by the Hierarchy of the United States, primarily, to insure proper spiritual service for all Catholics in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps of the United States; secondarily, to stimulate and coordinate all Catholic activities for the success of American arms in the war; thirdly, to prevent or remedy untoward conditions growing out of the war.

The National Catholic War Council consists of the fourteen Metropolitans of the United States. It acts through an Administrative Committee of four Bishops, appointed by the Metropolitans. An Executive Committee of priests and laymen from all parts of the country carry out the practical work, through a number of Standing Committees.

The Committee on National Catholic War Records, one of the standing Committees, has been directed by the Administrative Committee of Bishops to bend every effort to secure at once and to preserve an accurate and complete record of all Catholic American activity in the present war.

The securing of such a record will require the generous assistance of all Catholics, especially the aid and the sympathetic cooperation of every Bishop and Priest, particularly of every Pastor, the heads of Catholic Societies of men and women, and the editors of Catholic papers and magazines.

An individual appeal, therefore, is now made to you to do your share, large or small as it may be, to insure the success of our efforts to gather Catholic War Records. Proper War Records will go far to guarantee and facilitate adequate spiritual ministrations to our men in military service. They will show the needs of the men's families and dependents, during and after the war, and afford material for an inspiring chapter in the story of the Church's religious and patriotic cooperation in our national crisis.

The National Board for Historical Service, which has been created by a select group of scholars for present war needs, has called the attention "of State historical departments and societies and other public bodies, to the importance of preserving for permanent use the war records not only of the State and Federal Governments, but also of the large number of auxiliary organizations." It is "seeking information as to the attitude of particular social groups, political, racial, economic or religious," and its plans "include the publication of manual of war records." Our War Records can be made the contribution and answer of Catholics, and our War Records must be thorough and adequate in order that the Church find its place in the Nation's summary of War Service as proposed in this plan.

We desire to secure at once the name, age, home address, branch of service, and the name and address of nearest relative or next friend.

(a) *Of every Catholic man in the Army, Navy or Marines of the United States (state whether volunteer or drafted);*

(b) *Of those examined and passed, even though not yet called to service;*

(c) *Of those serving in medical, hospital or ambulance corps;*

(d) *Of chaplains, regular, non-commissioned, or supplying;*

(e) *Of helpers in cantonment, camps, or over-seas;*

(f) *Of every Catholic woman serving as nurse or in any other capacity.*

Further information and material desired for war records may be broadly defined as follows:

Episcopal pronouncements, acts, addresses, books, pamphlets; Priests' efforts of like character; Church celebrations, prayers; congregational celebrations, activities; group or individual participation on part of either clergy or laity.

Hence, Diocesan National War Council organization of Societies, National or Local, co-ordinated for War Work, and outline of work accomplished or contemplated, co-ordinated for present war work.

(a) *With K. of C. in raising of funds, amount contributed by Diocese or individuals, help in camp or extra-camp activities;*

(b) *With Red Cross, amount of contributions, number of memberships, branches, with number of workers and amount of work handed in, if no branch is established, statement whether private organization does work;*

(c) *With Food Conservation, method of cooperation;*

(d) *With Federal, State or Municipal War Measures;*

(e) *With chaplain aid or similar associations, amounts raised or contributed, supplies furnished chaplains, kits, altar supplies, literature, etc.*

A special Questionnaire will be sent respectively for all Catholic men's and women's societies.

Letters from soldiers, or about soldiers, newspaper or magazine articles treating of Catholics in war activity, are greatly desired.

Arrangements have been made to secure copies of every Catholic paper and magazine in the United States.

In some places a Diocesan War Record is being compiled in the home Chancery. This is likely to be accurate and thorough, and will afford a splendid history for home reading; a copy will aid us greatly.

An appeal is made to the Right Reverend Ordinaries for every suggestion and help they can give for the direction and success of the War Records, and every priest is earnestly urged to co-operate in every way possible.

Every bit of help in compiling the National Catholic War Records will count for the honor of Church and Country, and for the glory of the men who are offering their life's blood, and of the women who, in their husbands, sons, and brothers, are giving of their heart's blood, for God and the Right.

HENRY T. DRUMGOOLE, *Chairman.*

PETER GUILDAY, *Secretary.*

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WAR COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL WAR RECORDS

932 FOURTEENTH STREET, N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Administrative Committee

RT. REV. PETER J. MULDOON, D.D.

CHAIRMAN

RT. REV. JOSEPH SCHREMBBS, D.D.

RT. REV. PATRICK J. HAYES, D.D.

RT. REV. WILLIAM T. RUSSELL, D.D.

NAME OF CHURCH.....

TOWN OR CITY.....

DIOCESE.....

NAME OF PASTOR.....

Committee on Historical Records of Catholic War Activities

RT. REV. MONSIGNOR H. T.
DRUMGOOLE, D. D., LL.D.

CHAIRMAN

REV. PETER GUILDAY, PH.D.

SECRETARY

NOTE—Please Have Typewritten if Possible. If not Sufficient Space for Names, Please send for Additional Blanks or use Paper of same Dimensions.

NAME FAMILY	CHRISTIAN	AGE	HOME ADDRESS	BRANCH OF SERVICE		NAME AND AD- DRESS OF NEAREST RELATIVE
				ARMY OR NAVY	REG., RANK, ETC.	

The formation of Diocesan War Councils has not lagged behind the progress of the National War Council, and in many dioceses there has been formed a Committee on Historical Records which will act in conjunction with the central body at Washington. As an example of the work to be done, the following letter sent out by His Eminence Cardinal Farley, of New York, is worthy of preservation in these pages:

Cardinal's Residence

452 Madison Avenue

Rev. and Dear Father:

The National Catholic War Council in a circular addressed to the American Hierarchy has urged the importance of collecting and preserving accurate and complete statistics of Catholic participation in the war. This suggestion has my fullest and most cordial approval, and now that the first year has ended, I write to request your co-operation in the compilation of these statistics.

It is unnecessary to expatiate upon the value which such information, carefully prepared, will have for the Catholic apologist and historian of the future. I appeal, however, to your pride as a priest, and as a member of the archdiocesan clergy, to interest yourself seriously in the collection of war statistics for the Archdiocese of New York. After careful consideration of the problem, I have decided to ask each pastor to file in the Chancery Office a *Parish War Record for 1917*, which request will be repeated annually until the close of hostilities.

To insure order and uniformity in this very important matter, I would suggest that your report be typewritten on legal cap, bound, and properly inscribed in the manner legal documents are prepared. The information required can be grouped under the following general headings and sub-titles:

1. THE HONOR ROLL OF THE PARISH.

This should contain the names and addresses of all the young men of the parish in the Army and Navy, and should show their rank, branch of service, and the unit to which they have been assigned. For example:

Jones, John J. 24 East 52d St. Private. 306 Inf. U. S. N. A.

The list, of course, should be arranged alphabetically. The names of Catholic young women serving as nurses in military hospitals should also be included in the honor roll. Under this heading we have the most important data, which in many cases the pastors have already prepared.

2. CO-OPERATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL WAR MEASURES.

Under this heading should be included a statement of what the clergy and people of the parish did to assist:

- (a) *The New York State Military Census.*
(Cf. My circular of May 7, 1917.)
- (b) *The Federal Draft Census.*
(Cf. My Circular of May 31, 1917.)
- (c) *The Food Conservation Campaign.*
(Cf. My circular of June 28, 1917.)
- (d) *The Liberty Loan Campaigns and the War Savings Campaign.*
(Such information as you can gather regarding membership of parish-ioners on campaign committees, and the purchase of Bonds and Savings Certificates and Stamps by members of your parish.)
- (e) *Recruiting Campaigns.*
(Meetings held in parish halls, addresses by Clergy and members of the parish.)
- (f) *Patriotic Church Services.*
(Special reference to the announcement of the declaration of war in

circular of April 12, 1917, and to the observance of Prayer Sunday as asked in circular of October 24th.)

3. *CO-OPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS.*

(a) *The Red Cross Campaign for Funds.*

(Cf. Circular of June 22, 1917. The amount contributed, names of Catholic workers on the local committees, and the names of Catholics contributing large amounts.)

(b) *Branches of the Red Cross.*

(Parish branch, its meetings, its service. Local branches in which Catholic men or women are prominent workers, officials, etc.)

(c) *The Red Cross Membership Drive.*

(Cf. Circular recently sent you by Red Cross. Activity of clergy and Catholics in support of this drive and the results obtained in your parish.)

4. *CO-OPERATION WITH CATHOLIC WAR MOVEMENTS.*

(a) *The Knights of Columbus War Camp Activities.*

(Cf. Announcement in "Open Letter to New York Catholics," dated July 16, 1917, sent you with a letter to the "Priests of Manhattan and the Bronx," dated July 18, 1917. What aid did the parish give the K. of C. for their campaign July 22 to July 29th in workers and in money?)

Other Assistance to the Knights in their work.

(b) *National Catholic War Council.*

(c) *The League of Catholic Women.*

(Cf. Recommendation sent you under date of November 28, 1917.)

(d) *The Chaplains' Aid Society.*

5. *PARISH STATISTICS NOT INCLUDED IN PRECEDING HEADINGS.*

I believe the headings mentioned cover our activities quite thoroughly. To gather this information will require considerable labor, but the importance of the subject justifies my request, and I feel it will meet with your earnest support. The *Parish War Record* should be typewritten in duplicate, one copy to be preserved in the parish records and the other sent to the Chancery Office. I shall expect all records to be filed by the fifteenth of March.

I take this opportunity to commend the pastors of the archdiocese for their ready and enthusiastic support of all patriotic movements, and I confidently expect that as the war progresses their interest will increase. The flower of our Catholic youth is in the ranks; may God preserve its bloom and fragrance for the future of the Church in our wonderful land!

Praying for you every blessing, I am,

Faithfully yours in Christ,

JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY,

Archbishop of New York.

A Handbook of the National Catholic War Council is now being prepared, and before very long Committees of Historical Records will exist in every Catholic centre of the United States. No one can overestimate the value such an organization will have in arousing a nation-wide interest in Catholic history, both past, present and future.
